

Preface: Program Committee Co-Chairs

Actually, producing one of these volumes is very simple. First you make sure you have a program co-chair who is willing to do all the work. Then you check that you are working for a general conference chair and executive committee who answer their email quickly so that, even if it takes 10 or so emails to pin down the official abbreviation for the conference, the actual elapsed time is under a week. (It was, just barely, but despite this one snafu they were really great.) Next you round up a great group of very responsible area chairs, who in turn recruit (mostly) responsible reviewers. Then you wait for 258 papers to arrive from 22 countries (130 from the Americas, 53 Asia-Pacific, and 75 Europe-Africa), send them out to the reviewers, get back (most of) the reviews and go to the program committee meeting. This last bit, however requires you to have someone who will agree to host the committee meeting in a town with better flight connections than either Edmonton or Providence. For this we would like to thank Graeme Hirst of the University of Toronto, who did a fabulous job of making the committee meeting a success. You then hope that your fine program committee members not only are responsible but also have great senses of the absurd, so that after a day and a half of tough decision making everyone is still happy and working hard. They had and they did. Then you line up some great invited speakers, and we would like to thank Daphne Koller (Stanford) and Peter Norvig (Google) for agreeing to give the invited talks this year. Lastly, you try to corral 65 papers (39 Americas, 9 Asia-Pacific, and 17 Europe-Africa) into coherent groups, arrange the schedule, communicate with the chairs/committees for publications, the student sessions, workshops, demos, and local arrangements (not to mention Priscilla Rasmussen), all of whom, fortunately, are even better and more responsible than you are, and viola, here it is! You then hope that people will read this preface so that they will know what a great group put this on. Of course, no one reads these things. To test this hypothesis, the first person not connected with producing this volume who tells Eugene Charniak at the conference that he or she has read this line will get five dollars.

Oh, yes, one more thing. The program committee also picked a paper for the best paper award, a conference feature established last year. And as last year, the winner will be announced only at the last session of the conference. This implies that the winner's name(s) do not appear in the proceedings. To make sure that there is some written public record of the awards, we list below the previous year's winners.

Thanks for coming to the conference. We hope you enjoy the papers as much as we have.

Eugene Charniak
Dekang Lin
May 13, 2002

Winners of the Best Paper Award, Conference of the Association for Computational Linguistics

2001 Ulrich Germann, Michael Jahr, Kevin Knight, Daniel Marcu, and Kenji Yamada
for their paper "Fast Decoding and Optimal Decoding for Machine Translation"

Eugene Charniak for his paper "Immediate-Head Parsing for Language Models"